

## John Randolph to Andrew Jackson, October 24, 1831, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

### JOHN RANDOLPH TO JACKSON.

Richmond, October 24, 1831.

*My dear Sir,* Your very kind and friendly letter of the 21st of October was not recd. by me until to day. Nothing was farther from my intention than to suppose, or wish, that any departure from the established rules of the Treasury should be made in the settlement of my accounts with that Department. I have no such arrogance of spirit, but as in truth nearly the whole consists of the allowance made by you, I thought that the items of postage (not susceptible of vouchers) and of stationery, for which I transmitted the tradesman's receipt, might be passed without my personal attendance although I am ready to give it, if required, impatient as I am to set out for Florida before the winter sets in.

I am most anxious to see you if it were but for one hour: to tell you what I am incapable of writing and what I should be unwilling to put to paper, if I were otherwise circumstanced. Since my arrival, I have heard some things that you ought to know, if you have not been already apprized of them.

I cannot close this letter without calling your attention to the hard condition of our Chargè d' Affaires at St. Petersburg and at London. These gentlemen have new duties imposed upon them, involving additional expenses, without any means to defray them. I would not be understood as countenancing such abuse as that practised in the case of John A. King; but where, thro' the absence of the Minister the duty of Chargè d'Affaires devolves upon the Secretary of Legation *and he is, by the nomination of the President and approbation*

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*of the Senate, confirmed in that situation* , surely he ought to have something more for the additional expense (to say nothing of the additional duties) to which he is subjected, than the Salary of Secretary of Legation, which was previously his own.

I will take leave to call your attention to another subject. I mean our naval discipline. At my instance, the punishment of the lash was abolished in the Army; and if I were in Congress, I should feel myself constrained to bring forward a similar motion in regard to the Navy. I know that common sailors are a very different class of men from our militia men, and will bear what the spirit of these last cannot brook. But the scenes which I witnessed on board the Concord were so revolting, that I made up my mind never to take passage again on board of a vessel of War—at least with a newly shipped crew. The men were raw; some of them landsmen; most of them fishermen (not whalemens— *they* are the best of seamen) utterly ignorant of the rigging, or management of a square rigged vessel. The Midshipmen had to shew them the various ropes etc: the very names of which they were ignorant of, and knew not where to look for them—the lieutenants were worn down performing not their own proper duties only but those of the midshipmen also, who, in turn, were discharging the duties of able bodied seamen. Punishment by putting in irons, and by the *Colt* was continually going on. I do not know whether the *Cat* was used or not, as I always retreated to my stateroom to avoid the odious spectacle which surprised and shocked my negroe slaves. In seven years the same quantity of punishment would not be distributed among the same number of slaves as was inflicted in a voyage of three weeks from Hampton Roads to Portsmouth. What was done afterwards I know not, having been confined to my room and chiefly to my bed during the voyage from England to Cronstadt.

I congratulate you most cordially on the confusion in the Camp of the Enemy, and remain with every sentiment of confidence and regard, Dear Sir, your most faithful servant and friend

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May I ask the favour of you to read my letter to the Secretary of State? of this date. My health gets worse every day.